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ABSTRACT

A content analysis instrument was developed to help gain better insight into perceptions regarding terrorist violence and its power over mass media and to determine whether media coverage of such incidents encourages subsequent incidents. The first 3 days of coverage of two terrorist events as reported by the "New York Times" and the "Washington Post" were chosen: the 1977 Hanafi Muslim takeover of three buildings in Washington, D.C., and the Black September killings at the 1972 Olympics in Munich, Germany. The inital instrument included a limited number of categories/units, which then yielded a second series of categories, including the number of words devoted to (1) the terrorists' requests for publicity, (2) information about the hostages or victims, (3) loss of property or injuries with such activites, (4) governmental helplessness during the incident, and (5) criticism of media coverage of terrorist activity. In the course of this first phase of the project, the researchers observed that the terrorists were not always assured that their cause would be explained in any detail, or that any sympathetic education of the audience would take place; that the nature of the coverage did not appear even handed or simply informative, but was instead neutral or negative; and that the coverage of a terrorist attack in which lives were lost did not over-sensationalize the situations being reported. (HTH)

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MEDIA AND TERRORISM:

TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INSTRUMENT TO EXPLICATE THEIR RELATIONSHIP

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MEDIA AND TERRORISM:

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RECENT YEARS HAVE SEEN THE STUDIES OF TERRORISM GREATLY PROLIFERATE, ESPECIALLY THOSE STUDIES INVOLVING THE COMMUNICATIVE ASPECTS OF TERRORISM AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE. IN AN ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT WHERE A SCHOLAR'S STOCK IS MEASURED IN PART BY THE CURRENCY AND VITALITY OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS, WE SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED TO FIND THAT IT IS A BULL MARKET FOR STUDIES IN TERRORISM-AS-COMMUNICATION.

RESEARCHERS HAVE ADVANCED RECOGNITION OF THE ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS VALUE INHERENT IN TERROR VIOLENCE,[1] AND HAVE OFFERED

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[1] SEE THE COLLECTION OF ARTICLES IN Y. ALEXANDER AND M. FINGER, EDS., TERRORISM: INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES (NEW YORK: JOHN JAY, 1977).

CAREFUL DELINEATIONS OF THE COMMUNICATIVE COMPONENTS OF TERROR VIOLENCE.[2] WONDERFULLY BYZANTINE ARGUMENTS AS TO EXACTLY WHEN TERRORISM BEGAN TO EMERGE AS A FORM OF COMMUNICATIVE BEHAVIOR HAVE BEEN GIVEN LIFE AT OUR SCHOLARLY GATHERINGS.[3] OCCASIONALLY, ADMONITIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY OF COMMUNICATION SCHOLARS TO BEGIN MEANINGFUL RESEARCH INTO THE IMPLICATIONS OF TERRORISM-AS-COMMUNICATION HAVE BEEN FORTHCOMING.[4] THE ARTICLES AND CONVENTION PAPERS MULTIPLY.

THE CURRENT ACCENT UPON THE COMMUNICATIVE ELEMENT OF TERROR VIOLENCE HAS BEEN HEIGHTENED BY THE CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TERRORIST ACTIVITY AND THE EVER-ATTENTIVE MASS MEDIA SYSTEM. IN YEARS PAST IT MAY HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE TO THINK OF TERRORISM AS A CONFRONTATION OR CONFLAGRATION INVOLVING TWO PRIMARY PARTIES: THE TERRORIST AND THE VICTIM. THE "AUDIENCE" IN THIS LONG PAST SCENARIO EMERGED AS A RELATIVELY PASSIVE THIRD PARTY.[5] IN PLACE OF THIS COZY TWOSOME, THE

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[2]SEE JAN SCHREIBER, TERRORISTS AND WORLD ORDER (NEW YORK: MORROW, 1978), P. 113.

[3]SEE, FOR EXAMPLE, CARL BRYON HOLMBERG, "RHETORICAL TERRORISM AND THE TORTURE SHIFT," CONVENTION PAPER, EASTERN COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION, 1982.

[4]FOR A MODEST EXAMPLE, SEE WARREN DECKER AND DANIEL RAINEY, "TERRORISM AS COMMUNICATION," SCA CONVENTION, 1980, AVAILABLE THROUGH ERIC, JANUARY 1981.

[5]THIS IS NOT TO IMPLY THAT THE AUDIENCE HAS BEEN CONSIDERED INCONSEQUENTIAL TO THE TERRORIST. PURVEYORS OF VIOLENCE FROM ANCIENT TIMES HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED THE VALUE OF THE SOMETIMES STARK NON VERBAL COMMENTS MADE BY TERROR VIOLENCE TO INNOCENT BYSTANDERS.

MODERN RESEARCHER IS CONFRONTED BY A MENAGE A TROIS COMPOSED OF THE VICTIM, THE TERRORIST, AND THE UBIQUITOUS MASS MEDIA. THE PRESENCE OF THE MEDIA, IT HAS BEEN ARGUED, TRANSFORMS THE "AUDIENCE" AND OFFERS COMMUNICATIVE POSSIBILITIES UNAVAILABLE PRIOR TO THE ELECTRONIC AGE.

MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, THE MEDIA IS THOUGHT TO OFFER A BOON TO THE TERRORIST, AND IS FREQUENTLY CASTIGATED FOR OFFERING A SENSATIONALISTIC SPECTACLE IN WHICH THE GOVERNMENT FORCES ARE PORTRAYED AS IMPOTENT AND INEFFECTIVE.[6] ROBERT KUPPERMAN, WRITING IN A RECENT ISSUE OF THE ANNALS OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE, OFFERS THE POPULAR VIEW:

> THE TERROR EVENT ENJOYS AN UNPARALLELED POWER SIMPLY BECAUSE OF ITS MEDIA VALUE. OF ALL THE REASONS FOR TERRORIST SUCCESS, THE PLATFORM OFFERED BY THE . . . MEDIA IS BY FAR THE MOST IMPORTANT. . . . THE MEDIA -- WITTINGLY OR WILLINGLY -- ARE AN ACCOMPLICE OF THE ACT OF TERRORISM.[7]

THROUGHOUT THE LITERATURE, A CHARACTERIZATION OF THE MEDIA'S ROLE IN

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[6] SEE ROBERT H. KUPPERMAN, "TERROR, THE STRATEGIC TOOL: RESPONSE AND CONTROL," ANNALS, AAPSS, 463, SEPTEMBER 1982, ESP. P. 26.

[7] IBID., P. 27 AND 37. EMPHASIS ADDED.

TERRORIST INCIDENTS EMERGES. THE CHARACTERIZATION IS NOT FLATTERING, AND IS, AT TIMES, RATHER SLANDEROUS.

THIS PERCEPTION OF THE MEDIA HAS DEVELOPED FOR SEVERAL REASONS, TWO OF WHICH WE WILL BRIEFLY DISCUSS. FIRST, THE MEDIA IS SEEN AS A CONDUIT FOR THE TERRORIST'S MESSAGE, A CONDUIT WHICH IS WILLINGLY OFFERED BY THE MANAGERS OF THE MEDIA. IN ONE SENSE, TERRORIST ACTIVITY IS ASSUMED TO BE A SUCCESS IF THE MEDIA COVERS THE ACTIVITY AND DISTRIBUTES THE TERRORIST'S INTENDED MESSAGE. THE MEDIA ALMOST ALWAYS DOES SO. WE WILL RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO HIT A SMALL NAIL WITH A VERY LARGE HAMMER BY CITING ONLY ONE OF THE MULTITUDE OF STATED OPINIONS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE MEDIA IS THE DUPE OF THE TERRORISTS. CHERIF BASSIOUNI COVERS THE GROUND WELL WITH THIS ASSESSMENT OF THE MEDIA'S ROLE:

> COVERAGE OF TERRORIST ATTACKS IN PROGRESS IS THE OCCASION OF GREATEST CONFLICT BETWEEN THE INTERESTS OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES AND THOSE OF THE MEDIA. SUCH COVERAGE PROVIDES THE OPPORTUNITY MOST CONDUCIVE TO FULFILLING PERPETRATORS' OBJECTIVES OF OBTAINING PUBLICITY FOR THEIR CAUSE AND RIVETING

THE ATTENTION OF A GIVEN SOCIETY ON THEIR EXERCISE OF POWER IN OPEN DEFIANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE LAW.[8]

ATTITUDES SUCH AS BASSIOUNI'S HAVE LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR SUGGESTIONS REGARDING THE POSSIBLE LIMITATION OF THE MEDIA'S FREEDOM TO COVER ALL TERRORIST ACTIVITY AS IT SEES FIT, UNFETTERED BY POLICE CONSTRAINTS.[9] WHILE WE WOULD HESITATE TO DEFEND THE INTEGRITY OF THE MEDIA ESTABLISHMENT, IT MAY BE THAT SUCH EXTREME CHARACTERIZATIONS OF THE MEDIA'S NEGATIVE ROLE IN TERRORIST ACTIVITY HAVE BEEN MADE IN SOME HASTE.

A SECOND PERCEPTION IS THAT MEDIA COVERAGE ACTUALLY ENCOURAGES AND INCREASES THE AMOUNT OF TERROR VIOLENCE WHICH IS UNLEASHED UPON THE WORLD. MORE THAN BEING DUPES OF THE TERRORISTS, THE MEDIA ARE SEEN AS AN ACTIVE ACCOMPLICE, ESPECIALLY BY THOSE WHO ARE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN COMBATTING TERRORISM. FOR EXAMPLE, 93% OF POLLED POLICE CHIEFS INDICATED THAT, IN THEIR OPINIONS, LIVE COVERAGE OF TERRORIST ACTS ENCOURAGES MORE TERRORIST ACTS.[10]

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[8] M. CHERIF BASSIOUNI, "MEDIA COVERAGE OF TERRORISM: THE LAW AND THE PUBLIC." JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION 32:2 (SPRING 1982):130.

[9] THESE SUGGESTIONS HAVE TO DO WITH MEDIA IN THE UNITED STATES. EUROPEAN MEDIA ARE GENERALLY CONSTRAINED IN TERRORIST SITUATIONS IN A WAY U.S. MEDIA ARE NOT.

[10] MICHAEL SOMMER, POLL REPORTED IN EDITOR AND PUBLISHER, AUGUST 12, 1977, P. 12.

THE PROBLEM HERE, AS WE SEE IT, IS THAT THE ATTITUDES OUTLINED THUSFAR ARE BASED UPON A NUMBER OF ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT WHY MEDIA COVERAGE OUGHT TO BEGET MORE TERRORISM OR OUGHT TO PLAY TO THE NEEDS OF THE TERRORIST, BUT NOT UPON ANY RESEARCH WHICH INDICATES THAT MEDIA COVERAGE ACTUALLY DOES ANYTHING POSITIVE FOR THE TERRORIST. ANECDOTES ILLUSTRATING THE MEDIA'S IRRESPONSIBILITY ABOUND IN THE LITERATURE. THE TIP-OFF TO THE HANAFI MUSLIMS WHICH LED TO SEVERAL MORE HOSTAGES BEING TAKEN DURING THEIR SEIGE IN WASHINGTON IS FAMOUS, AS IS THE GLORIFICATION OF PATTY HEARST'S FLIGHT WITH THE SLA, DURING WHICH THE TERRORIST ORGANIZATION WAS LIFTED TO UNDERDOG-HERO STATUS. OUR ULTIMATE QUESTION IS SIMPLE: ARE THESE ANECDOTES AND PERCEPTIONS BASED UPON SOUND RESEARCH FROM WHICH THE ILLUSTRATIONS HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY EXCERPTED, OR ARE THEY MERELY EXAMPLES CULLED FROM THE COVERAGE TO REINFORCE AN AUTHOR'S OPINION? WE HOPED TO FIND THE FORMER, BUT FEARED THE LATTER.

OBVIOUSLY, IN ORDER TO GATHER DATA RELATIVE TO THE QUESTION A MORE MUNDANE PRELIMINARY STEP WAS NECESSARY. IN ORDER TO DO THIS TYPE OF RESEARCH IT IS NECESSARY TO DESIGN AN INSTRUMENT WHICH WILL HELP TO EXPLICATE MEDIA COVERAGE OF TERRORIST ACTIVITY. THEREFORE, WITH AN EYE TOWARD THE LARGER QUESTION WE UNDERTOOK THIS PRELIMINARY PROJECT TO DISCOVER AND DESIGN AN INSTRUMENT FOR APPLICATION TO A VARIETY OF MEDIA REPORTS OF TERRORIST ACTIVITY.

METHODS

AS A FIRST STEP TOWARD CONSTRUCTING A CONTENT ANALYSIS INSTRUMENT WE OPTED TO USE PRINT MEDIA COVERAGE OF TERRORIST ACTIVITY. WE CHOSE PRINT COVERAGE FOR SEVERAL REASONS: 1) WE CONCLUDED THAT PRINT COVERAGE WOULD BE MORE COMPLETE THAN ELECTRONIC COVERAGE GIVEN THE LACK OF TIME/SPACE CONSTRAINTS ON PRINT; 2) WE CONCLUDED THAT AN INSTRUMENT DESIGNED FOR FUTURE ANALYSES SHOULD INCLUDE AS MANY CONTENT ANALYSIS CATEGORIES/UNITS AS POSSIBLE, AND SINCE THE PRINT COVERAGE WAS MORE EXTENSIVE IT WOULD SPAWN AN INCREASE IN THE VARIETY AND NUMBER OF POTENTIAL CATEGORIES; 3) THE PRINT MEDIA COVERAGE WOULD ALLOW US TO HAVE THE ACTUAL COVERAGE DICTATE THE SELECTION OF THE CATEGORIES/UNITS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE INSTRUMENT; AND FINALLY, 4) PRINT COVERAGE WAS MORE EASILY AVAILABLE AND CODEABLE, PARTICULARLY FOR THE TYPE OF PRELIMINARY PROJECT WHICH WE WERE DESIGNING.

CONSISTENT WITH THIS REASONING, WE SELECTED TWO NEWSPAPERS FOR THIS PORTION OF THE INVESTIGATION: THE NEW YORK TIMES AND THE WASHINGTON POST. BOTH WERE READILY AVAILABLE AND GAVE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO THE TWO TERRORIST ACTIVITIES WHICH WE SELECTED FOR THIS ANALYSIS. WE ALSO ARBITRARILY SELECTED THE FIRST THREE DAYS OF COVERAGE OF THE TERRORIST ACTIVITY SINCE THE EXPLORATORY NATURE OF THIS PORTION

OF OUR INVESTIGATION DID NOT REQUIRE A FULL REVIEW OF THE COVERAGE.

THE TERRORIST ACTS SELECTED WERE THE HANAFI MUSLIM TAKEOVER OF THREE BUILDINGS IN WASHINGTON, D. C. (MARCH 10-11, 1977), AND THE BLACK SEPTEMBER KILLINGS AT THE OLYMPIC VILLAGE IN MUNICH, WEST GERMANY (SEPTEMBER 5-7, 1972). THESE ACTS WERE SELECTED BECAUSE THEY DID RECEIVE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE, AND BECAUSE ONE ACT WAS DOMESTIC, THE OTHER INTERNATIONAL. GIVEN THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROJECT -- TO GENERATE THE CATEGORIES/UNITS TO BE INCLUDED IN A CONTENT ANALYSIS INSTRUMENT -- WE REASONED THAT BOTH THE SELECTION OF THE TERRORIST ACTS AND THE NEWSPAPERS REVIEWED WERE APPROPRIATE FOR OUR PURPOSES.

TO GUIDE OUR INITIAL EXPLORATIONS OF THE COVERAGE WE CONSTRUCTED AN INSTRUMENT WHICH INCLUDED A LIMITED NUMBER OF CATEGORIES/UNITS. WE LIMITED THE NUMBER SO AS TO MAXIMIZE THE IMPACT THAT THE ACTUAL MEDIA COVERAGE WOULD HAVE ON THE GENERATION OF THE CATEGORIES/UNITS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE INSTRUMENT BEING CONSTRUCTED.[11] WE ALSO LEFT THE INITIAL SET OF CATEGORIES/UNITS RELATIVELY IMPRECISE, HOPING THAT THE IMPRECISION MIGHT CONTRIBUTE TO VARIETY IN THE GENERATION OF THE SECOND SET OF CATEGORIES/UNITS.[12]

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[11] MANY OF THE FIRST GENERATION RESEARCH QUESTIONS WERE DRAWN FROM OUR PRIOR INVESTIGATIONS RELATED TO TERRORISM AS A FORM OF COMMUNICATION.

[12] THE FIRST ROUND OF UNITS WERE TO BE SELF-CODED. EVEN THOUGH THE BIAS INHERENT IN SELF-CODING IS OBVIOUS, WE HOPED THAT CLOSE EXAMINATION OF THE COVERAGE WOULD HELP US DEVELOPE MORE UNITS.

THREE METHODS OF QUANTIFICATION WERE CONSIDERED: 1) THE NUMBER OF LINES DEVOTED TO EACH UNIT, 2) THE NUMBER OF WORDS DEVOTED TO EACH UNIT,[13] AND 3) THE NUMBER OF COLUMN INCHES DEVOTED TO EACH UNIT. LINES WERE REJECTED BECAUSE OF A LACK OF STANDARDIZATION BETWEEN SOURCES, AND COLUMN INCHES WERE REJECTED AS TOO IMPRECISE AN INDICATOR OF THE AMOUNT OF SPACE DEVOTED TO EACH UNIT. ALL OF THESE INFLUENCES CONSIDERED, THE ORIGINAL CATEGORIES/UNITS USED WERE:

A. HOW MANY WORDS WERE DEVOTED TO INDICATING THE TERRORISTS' REQUEST(S) FOR PUBLICITY?

B. HOW MANY WORDS WERE DEVOTED TO INDICATING THE DISPOSITION OF THE TERRORISTS?

C. HOW MANY WORDS WERE DEVOTED TO INDICATING THE DIFFICULTY OF HANDLING THE TERRORIST ACTIVITY?

D. HOW MANY WORDS WERE DEVOTED TO THE PREVENTION OF HARM ASSOCIATED WITH TERRORIST ACTIVITY?

E. HOW MANY WORDS WERE DEVOTED TO THE APPREHENSION OF THE TERRORISTS?

F. HOW MANY WORDS WERE DEVOTED TO INFORMATION ABOUT THE HOSTAGES AND/OR VICTIMS?

G. HOW MANY WORDS WERE DEVOTED TO REPORTING THE LOSS OF LIFE ASSOCIATED WITH A TERRORIST ACTIVITY?

H. HOW MANY WORDS WERE DEVOTED TO REPORTING THE LOSS OF PROPERTY ASSOCIATED WITH A TERRORIST ACTIVITY?

I. HOW MANY WORDS WERE DEVOTED TO EXPLAINING THE WHO/WHAT/WHY OF THE TERRORISTS AND THE TERRORIST ACTIVITY?

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[13] MEASURED ON THE BASIS OF 5 CHARACTERS TO THE WORD.

J. How many words were devoted to reporting the nature and number of injuries associated with a terrorist activity?

In addition to serving as a catalyst for developing more descriptive categories, the questions listed above were all included because they strike at the heart of the type of information which should be of most value to the terrorist in the attempt to gain a forum, or the information which the terrorist should want to avoid. Therefore, our first round of coding could be expected to produce more questions as well as some indication of whether the terrorists were getting their message across via the media coverage.

Second Generation Categories

The initial exploration using the first generation questions yielded a number of additional categories to be included in the content analysis instrument.[14] The categories to be included in the instrument as it is currently designed include some of the old and a variety of additional catagories. The second generation categories are:

A. Words devoted to explaining the purpose/cause of the terrorist activity.

[14] See Appendix A.

B. WORDS DEVOTED TO EXPLAINING THE DEMANDS OF THE TERRORIST.

C. WORDS DEVOTED TO DESCRIBING THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS.

D. WORDS DEVOTED TO THE SUCCESSFUL PREVENTION OF HARM ASSOCIATED WITH TERRORIST ACTIVITY.

E. WORDS DEVOTED TO THE UNSUCCESSFUL PREVENTION OF HARM ASSOCIATED WITH TERRORIST ACTIVITY.

F. WORDS DEVOTED TO REPORTING GOVERNMENTAL HELPLESSNESS IN HANDLING A TERRORIST ACTIVITY.

G. WORDS DEVOTED TO EXPLAINING WHO THE TERRORISTS WERE.

H. WORDS DEVOTED TO EXPLAINING WHAT THE TERRORISTS DID.

I. WORDS DEVOTED TO EXPLAINING THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF THE ACT.

J. WORDS DEVOTED TO EXPLAINING CONCESSIONS TO THE TERRORIST.

K. WORDS DEVOTED TO EXPLAINING THREATS MADE BY THE TERRORIST.

L. WORDS DEVOTED TO EXPLAINING THE NATURE OF MEDIA CONTACTS WITH THE TERRORISTS.

M. WORDS DEVOTED TO EXPLAINING THE RATIONALE BEHIND A TERRORIST ACT FROM THE TERRORIST'S POINT OF VIEW.

N. WORDS DEVOTED TO EXPLAINING THE RATIONALE BEHIND A TERRORIST ACT FROM SOURCES OTHER THAN THE TERRORIST.

O. WORDS DEVOTED TO EXPLAINING OTHER TERRORIST ACTIVITY.

P. WORDS DEVOTED TO CRITICISM OF MEDIA COVERAGE OF TERRORIST ACTIVITY.

Q. WORDS DEVOTED TO REPORTING OF SPECTATOR/COMMUNITY REACTION TO A TERRORIST ACT.

R. WORDS DEVOTED TO EXPLAINING THE EFFECT OF A TERRORIST ACT UPON THE DAILY ROUTINE OF THE LOCAL POPULACE.

S. WORDS DEVOTED TO EXPLAINING THE "HOW-TO" ASPECTS OF THE TERRORIST ACT.

T. WORDS DEVOTED TO EXPLAINING THE DETAILS OF GOVERNMENT ACTION IN RESPONSE TO THE TERRORIST ACTIVITY.

U. WORDS DEVOTED TO EXPLAINING THE TERRORISTS' REQUESTS FOR PUBLICITY.

V. WORDS DEVOTED TO EXPLAINING THE DISPOSITION OF THE TERRORISTS.

W. WORDS DEVOTED TO EXPLAINING THE APPREHENSION OF THE TERRORISTS.

X. WORDS DEVOTED TO INFORMATION ABCUT THE HOSTAGES AND/OR VICTIMS.

Y. WORDS DEVOTED TO REPORTING THE LOSS OF LIFE.

Z. WORDS DEVOTED TO REPORTING THE LOSS OF PROPERTY.

AA. WORDS DEVOTED TO REPORTING THE INJURIES INCURRED.

IN THE SECOND PHASE OF THE PROJECT AND BEYOND, THESE NEW CATEGORIES WILL BE APPLIED TO COVERAGE OF TERRORIST ACTIVITY IN THE PRINT MEDIA, WITH THE ULTIMATE GOAL BEING TO ADAPT THEM TO THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA AND THEREBY BEGIN TO ANSWER OUR ORIGINAL QUESTION CONCERNING THE NATURE OF THE GENERAL COVERAGE OF TERRORIST ACTIVITY.

OBSERVATIONS

In the course of phase one of the project, several observations began to emerge which seem to belie the unitersality of the conventional wisdom about the relationship between the media, the terrorist, and the victim.

First, the terrorist is not always assured that the cause will be explained in any detail, or that any sympathetic education of the audience will take place. In the Hanafi siege, the coverage was somewhat detailed as regarded the origins of the Hanafi sect and the reasons for their immediate action. In the Munich incident, however, there was little if any reporting of the rationale for the acts, and there was an overwhelming amount of unsympathetic reaction reported and given prominent exposure. The explanations even became stereotyped, with the Black September organization becoming the ultimate villan. This calls into the question the belief that <u>ANY</u> coverage of the rationale for the act is good, and that the extreme nature of the event does not diminish the impact of the message relating to the act itself.

Second, the nature of the coverage in general appears not to be even-handed and simply informative. Far from making the terrorists

HEROIC FIGURES, AS SOME HAVE SUGGESTED MIGHT BE THE CASE.[15] THE HANAFI COVERAGE WAS NEUTRAL, PERHAPS UNDERSTANDING, BUT THE MUNICH COVERAGE WAS EXTREMELY NEGATIVE AND BIASED COMPLETELY AGAINST THE BLACK SEPTEMBERISTS.

THIRD, WHILE A TERRORIST ATTACK IN WHICH LIVES ARE LOST IS SENSATIONAL IN AND OF ITSELF, THE COVERAGE OF THE ACTS IN WASHINGTON AND MUNICH SEEMED TO AVOID THE OPPORTUNITY TO OVER-DRAMATIZE OR OVER-SENSATIONALIZE THE SITUATIONS BEING REPORTED. THE NEW YORK TIMES REPORTING OF THE HANAFI INCIDENT WAS COLDLY UNSENSATIONAL, EXCEPT IN THE VERY LIMITED REPORTING OF THE ONE DEATH, AND THE POST, EVEN THOUGH DEALING WITH A LOCAL INCIDENT, SEEMED TO ATTEMPT TO AVOID OVER-REPORTING THE INJURIES AND THE ONE DEATH. IN THE MUNICH CASE, FAR MORE SPACE WAS USED DESCRIBING NEGATIVE REACTIONS THAN DETAILING THE SENSATIONAL.

FOURTH, THE ALLEGED GLORIFICATION OF TERRORIST ACTIVITY BY THE MEDIA[16] WAS IN EVIDENCE LITTLE IF AT ALL IN THE REPORTS WE SURVEYED FOR THIS PROJECT. AGAIN, THE REPORTING SEEMED TO GO IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION, UNDERLINING THE INGLORIOUS ASPECTS OF TERROR VIOLENCE.

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[15] SEE SCHREIBER, P. 80.

[16] SEE BASSIOUNI, PP. 133-136.

FINALLY, WE FOUND THAT THERE WAS NO UNEDITED PLATFORM OFFERED TO THE TERRORISTS IN THE COVERAGE OF THE HANAFI SIEGE OR THE MUNICH ACTION. IN THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN WASHINGTON, THE HANAFI SPOKESMEN DID HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK DIRECTLY TO THE RADIO AND TELEVISION AUDIENCES FOR A LIMITED AMOUNT OF TIME, BUT THE COMMENTARY WHICH ACCOMPANIED THEIR MESSAGES, AND THE IN-DEPTH MEDIATED COVERAGE IN THE Post, ASSURED THAT THEIR POINT OF VIEW WAS NOT THE ONLY ONE HEARD. THE EVENTS IN MUNICH WERE BLACKED OUT SO THAT ALL OF THE INFORMATION OBTAINED BY THE OUTSIDE WORLD WAS OBTAINED THROUGH MEDIATED SOURCES.

AGAIN, WE WOULD STRESS THAT WE DO NOT OFFER THESE OBSERVATIONS AS CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE GENERAL NATURE OF MEDIA COVERAGE OF TERROR VIOLENCE. WE FIND THEM INTERESTING BECAUSE THEY EMERGED FROM AN ACTUAL EXAMINATION OF A LIMITED SLICE OF COVERAGE OF TWO SPECIFIC EVENTS, AND BECAUSE THEY SEEM NOT TO FIT THE GENERALIZATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN DRAWN AGAIN AND AGAIN BY COMMENTATORS UPON TERRORISM.

DISCUSSION

REEVALUATING THE RESULTS OF OUR PROJECT WE HAVE DRAWN A FEW VERY TENTATIVE "CONCLUSIONS" WHICH WILL INFORM AND GUIDE OUR SECOND ROUND OF CONTENT ANALYSES.

OUR FIRST TENTATIVE CONCLUSION IS THAT WE MUST BEGIN TO QUESTION THE ACCURACY OF THE CONVENTIAL WISDOM ABOUT MASS MEDIA AND TERRORISM AS IT IS FOUND IN THE SWEEPING STATEMENTS AND GENERALITIES OF MANY "RESEARCHERS." STATEMENTS WHICH BOLDLY ASSERT THAT MEDIA COVERAGE PROVIDES DESIRED PUBLICITY FOR THE TERRORIST, OR THAT THE MEDIA STAGE IS THE CARROT ENTICING TERRORISTS TO ENGAGE IN MORE ACTIVITY, OR THAT TERRORISTS' CAUSES ARE FULLY AND SYMPATHETICALLY EXPLAINED BY THE MEDIA, ARE AT BEST NOT DESCRIPTIVE AND AT WORST MISLEADING.

MANY FACTORS COMBINE TO DETERMINE WHETHER MEDIA COVERAGE HELPS OR HURTS THE TERRORIST'S CAUSE: GENERALITIES SIMPLY WILL NOT HOLD UP UNDER THE WEIGHT OF THOSE DIVERSE INFLUENCES. THE NATURE OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRINT AND ELECTRONIC COVERAGE MUST BE CONSIDERED. INSTANT INFORMATION VS. DELAYED INFORMATION; MASS AUDIENCES VS. SELECT AUDIENCES; SHALLOW COVERAGE VS. COVERAGE-IN-DEPTH: THESE DIFFERENCES MAY ACTUALLY MAKE THE PRINT MEDIA AN ANTAGONIST OF THE TERRORIST. THIS IS SIGNIFICANT IN LIGHT OF THE POTENTIAL THAT THE PRINT MEDIA HAVE

TO HELP FORM THE OPINIONS AND ATTITUDES OF SOCIAL LEADERS AND DECISION MAKERS.

THE NATURE OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND INTERNATIONAL VIOLENCE AS THEY ARE COVERED BY THE MEDIA MUST BE CONSIDERED. A STATEMENT WHICH ACCURATELY DESCRIBES THE COVERAGE OF AN EVENT LIKE THE KNEECAPPING OF A DIPLOMAT BY THE RED BRIGADE CANNOT BE APPLIED WITH EQUAL ACCURACY TO A BOMBING IN NEW YORK CITY. MANY OTHER ELEMENTS COULD BE ELABORATED, BUT THE POINT IS MADE -- THE SPECIFIC EVENT, THE SPECIFIC LOCATION, THE SPECIFIC TIME, AND THE SPECIFIC AUDIENCE WILL DETERMINE HOW THE COVERAGE INFLUENCES THE TERRORIST AND THE AUDIENCE. TO DATE, FAR TOO LITTLE OF THE "RESEARCH" ON TERRORISM REFLECTS THIS COMPLEXITY.

A SECOND CONCLUSION, NO LESS IMPORTANT, HAS TO DO WITH THE NATURE OF THE METHODS BY WHICH STATEMENTS REGARDING TERRORISM AND MEDIA ARE GENERATED. IT APPEARS TO US THAT THERE IS A REAL POSSIBILITY THAT WRITERS ARE SEARCHING THE MEDIA ACCOUNTS OF TERROR VIOLENCE FOR EXAMPLES WHICH SUBSTANTIATE THE GENERALITIES RATHER THAN ENGAGING IN SOUND RESEARCH TO DEVELOP GOOD CONCLUSIONS. SCHOLARS MUST ACTUALLY LOOK AT THE COVERAGE IN A METHODOLOGICALLY SOUND MANNER IN ORDER TO DEVELOP SOME IDEA OF WHAT IS REALLY BEING SAID AND WRITTEN ABOUT THE TERRORISTS BY THE MEDIA AS A WHOLE. IT IS TIME TO STOP USING CBS NEWS AS A STRAW MAN AND BEGIN TO SEE WHAT THE MEDIA AS AN ENTIRE SYSTEM ARE DOING.

FINALLY, WE SUGGEST SOME DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TERROR VIOLENCE AND THE MEDIA:

1) MORE TENTATIVE PROBING MUST BE DONE IN ORDER TO REFINE THE PROCESS OF CONTENT ANALYSIS IN INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION AS IT APPLIES DIRECTLY TO THE COVERAGE OF TERRORISM IN THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA AND THE PRINT MEDIA;

2) SPECIFIC CONTENT ANALYSES OF THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA AND THE PRINT MEDIA SHOULD BE DONE IN ORDER TO FIND OUT EXACTLY WHAT IS ACTUALLY BEING OFFERED TO THE AUDIENCES;

3) COMPARISONS OF THE COVERAGE IN THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA AND THE PRINT MEDIA SHOULD BE DONE, INCLUDING AN ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTS OF EACH MEDIUM;

4) STATEMENTS WHICH ARE CURRENTLY ACCEPTED AS DESCRIPTIVE OF MEDIA COVERAGE OF TERRORISM SHOULD BE DIRECTLY CHALLENGED AND SHOULD STAND OR FALL BASED ON DATA FROM THE REAL WORLD, NOT CONVENTIONAL WISDOM.

MOST OF OUR SUGGESTIONS HAVE TO DO WITH METHOD, AND THE CARE WITH WHICH ONE SHOULD GENERALIZE FROM THE AVAILABLE "EVIDENCE." AT THE NEW YORK CONVENTION OF SCA, TWO YEARS AGO, WE SURVEYED THE THEN CURRENT STATE OF RESEARCH IN TERRORISM AND COMMUNICATION. IN 1980 THE MOST DESCRIPTIVE TERM WE COULD APPLY TO THE RESEARCH AREA WAS "INCHOATE." EVEN THOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN ADDITIONS TO THE VOLUME OF RESEARCH IN THE AREA, OUR DESCRIPTION OF THE FIELD AS A WHOLE HAS CHANGED, SADLY, LITTLE IF AT ALL.

APPENDIX

The following tables are reported as examples of some of the tentative data which we collected utilizing the original ten (10) categories. The data is not offered as evidence of any claims but only as an indication of what form the reporting of the data will take given further content analyses.

TABLE 1

Hanafi Takeover

New York Times

Categories	Date 3/10/77	Date 3/11/77	Date 3/12/77
A. Requests for publicity	0	0	0
B. Disposition of Terrorists	0	17	609
C. Difficulty of handling	0	31	56
D. Prevention of harm	0	153	119
E. Apprehension of terrorists	0	98	35
F. Information on hostages/victims	913	387	1841
G. Loss of Life	100	342	27
H. Loss of property	0	0	0
I. Who/What/Why/ Where of terrorists	790	2308	245
J. Reports of Injuries	102	41	7

TABLE 2

Black September
(Munich)

Washington Post

Categories	Date 9/6/72	Date 9/7/72	Date 9/8/72
A. Requests for publicity	16	0	0
B. Disposition of terrorists	31	95	100
C. Difficulty of handling	420	840	195
D. Prevention of harm	0	0	0
E. Apprehension of terrorists	0	170	0
F. Information on hostages/victims	77	0	295
G. Loss of Life	497	179	95
H. Loss of property	0	0	0
I. Who/What/Why/ Where of terrorists	710	495	150
J. Reports of injuries	0	0	0